

Whalen, Marilyn

From: Mogharabi, Nahal
Sent: Wednesday, September 10, 2014 9:21 AM
To: Blumenfeld, Jared
Subject: Fwd: Malibu City council approves resolution on testing and removal of caulk.
Attachments: image001.jpg

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Nahal

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Date: September 10, 2014 at 9:03:45 AM PDT
To: "Huetteman, Tom" <Huetteman.Tom@epa.gov>, "Scott, Jeff" <Scott.Jeff@epa.gov>
Cc: "Mogharabi, Nahal" <MOGHARABI.NAHAL@EPA.GOV>, "Zito, Kelly" <ZITO.KELLY@EPA.GOV>, "Keener, Bill" <Keener.Bill@epa.gov>
Subject: Malibu City council approves resolution on testing and removal of caulk.

Council Pressures School Board on PCB Testing

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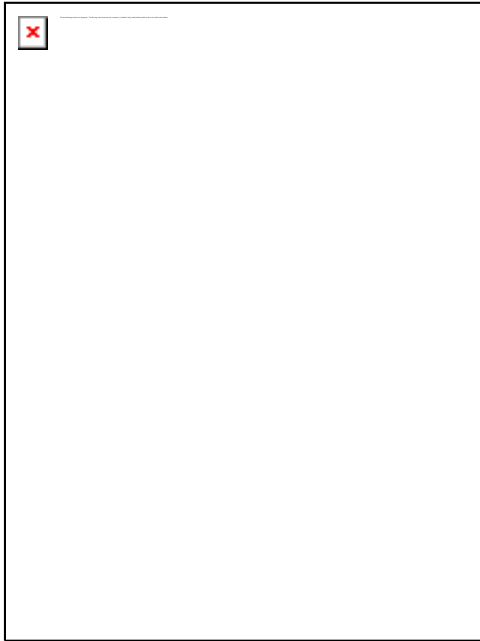
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Emily Sawicki / TMT

Oscar de la Torre addresses Council

Posted: Tuesday, September 9, 2014 12:00 pm | *Updated: 10:03 pm, Tue Sep 9, 2014.*

Council Pressures School Board on PCB Testing By Emily Sawicki / emily@malibutimes.com **The Mailbu Times** | [7 comments](#)

After months of clamoring from Malibu Unites and other school stakeholders, the Malibu City Council finally took an official stand Monday, voting 5-0 on a resolution demanding source testing for PCBs at all Malibu schools.

As the one-year anniversary of the discovery of PCBs in Malibu High School and Middle School approaches, the council unanimously agreed to exercise the bully pulpit, passing a resolution to pressure the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education for action in further testing the schools for toxic contaminants.

“Part of the recital should be: here we are, September 2014 and we’re here, I mean it’s crazy, it’s nuts,” Councilwoman Joan House said.

PCBs were first discovered in soil of the Malibu Middle School quad in 2009, which was not made public until October 2013, after several teachers expressed concern that cases of thyroid cancer among staff could have a causal link. PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, were a common building material in the mid-20th century, but were later discovered to be hazardous substances.

Since then, many parents have complained that the school board’s handling of the situation has been inadequate, as the district has agreed to test air and wipe samples, but not building materials such as caulk, where PCBs are mostly found.

The council agreed that in addition to requesting further action from the school board, written requests for support in PCB testing should be sent out all the way up the bureaucratic line.

"I don't have a problem, at the end of this, that we should also be sending copies to the state and the LA County representatives, and even federal," Mayor Skylar Peak said.

Peak, who presented Monday night's resolution, has become the central political figure in Malibu over the PCB testing and cleanup at the high school, since residents, parents and students with Malibu Unites reached out directly to him in their plea for further testing of MHS.

The resolution, in part, states that the board of the SMMUSD has not worked hard enough to ensure student safety.

"SMMUSD has fallen short in its efforts to fully inform the community and appropriately address the serious concerns of parents and school staff," the resolution reads.

"City Council hereby urges SMMUSD to take immediate action to conduct source testing for PCBs at all Malibu school campuses and remove all sources of PCBs," the text continues.

Malibu Unites out in force

A total of 29 members of the public spoke at Monday's meeting in support of the council's resolution, including students, parents, experts and activists.

Notable speakers included Malibu Unites founders Jennifer and Matt deNicola, Malibu dad and actor Josh Malina, Malibu Unites health scientist Kurt Fehling and Oscar de la Torre, a member of the SMMUSD School Board.

"I do hope that you vote positively on tonight's resolution so that we can start getting the ball rolling on comprehensive testing," de la Torre told the Council, adding, "My hope is that we set a national standard."

De la Torre has become the most outspoken school board member when it comes to PCB issues at MHS, after appearing at the Malibu Unites rally on Aug. 12 to voice his support for the cause. De la Torre, who has served on the board since 2010 is up for reelection in November.

Jennifer deNicola voiced her agreement with de la Torre, stating that Malibu's handling of the issue will set a precedent for other schools dealing with similar toxin issues.

"We are going to change how PCBs are handled in all schools for all children in the state of California," deNicola said.

According to many speakers, including environmental investigator for Malibu Unites Bob Bocock, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will not be the ones to solve the issue.

“The EPA has failed you and will continue to fail you. They’re not here to help you,” Bocock alleged.

District unswayed by city’s demands

On Tuesday, however, the district indicated it would not change its testing plans in response to the City Council’s demands.

In a statement released Tuesday, officials said they continue to place trust in the EPA.

“Following months of testing, EPA has been very clear that they are not recommending that the District conduct more testing, since the air and surface wipe tests have indicated that the Malibu High School buildings are safe, per EPA benchmarks,” the statement reads, in effect refusing the demands for source testing stated in the city’s resolution.

They did promise to pass the city’s message along.

“We will forward the resolution to the oversight agencies in order to keep them fully informed of the City Council’s expressed concerns,” the district said, making no further promises of action.

Editor's note: This article previously stated PCBs were discovered at the Middle School in October 2013. They were discovered in the summer of 2009.

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